

What You Need To Know

Computer security is one of the most important aspects of owning a computer. Unfortunately, many people are not aware how easily their system can be compromised and what effects that compromise may have. For example, did you know:

- Responding to “remove your address” options on spam lists will usually result in more spam;
- E-mail is not encrypted or secure without using special software – NEVER send personal information (passwords, SSNs) in e-mail. E-mail can be intercepted;
- Implementing file sharing may accidentally allow someone over the Internet to see and delete the entire contents of your hard drive;
- Another effect of file sharing is that you can unknowingly execute a Trojan Horse program, allowing a complete stranger to have remote control of your computer;
- That you should be wary of ALL unsolicited e-mail attachments or files – even if you know the sender;
- Your computer system can be used to attack other systems over the Internet;
- You can have your identity stolen if your computer system has been compromised, and
- If you are connected to the Texas State system and your computer system has been compromised, your Internet access will be suspended until your system can be cleaned or rebuilt.

What You Need To Do

Establish Passwords

Do not share passwords.

Change your password regularly.

<http://www.tr.txstate.edu/apps>

Create a local Administrator password:

Windows 2000 or Windows XP Professional users:

1. Press **Ctrl-Alt-Delete** on your Windows 2000 or Windows XP Professional computer
2. In the dialog window, click the **Change Password...** button
3. For the **User name**, enter **Administrator**
4. Next to **Log on to**, select your local system ("**this computer**")
5. Enter the old password (if known). Then, enter a new, secure password and confirm it.
6. Click **OK**

XP Home users:

1. Go to **Start-Control Panels-User Accounts**
2. Double click on the account with Administrator rights
3. Click on **Create a password**.
4. Type in your new password and confirm it. You can enter a password hint if you wish.
5. Click on the **Create password** button.

Lock Your Computer

Lock out your Windows 2000/XP workstation any time you walk away from your machine.

Press **Ctrl+Alt+Delete**

Click **Lock Computer**

Apply All Critical Patches

We strongly recommend that you configure Microsoft's Update program to automatically check for new patches. For step-by-step instructions on how to do this for your specific version of Windows, please visit <http://www.microsoft.com/security/protect>.

For Apple, visit

<http://www.apple.com/support/security>.

Back Up Your Data

Be sure to make backup copies of your computer data, store them securely, and consider storing additional copies at another location. Faculty and staff are encouraged to contact their department technical support person for the availability of local file server space.

Maintain Your System

Do not install unnecessary programs or services.

Activate your desktop firewall.

<http://www.microsoft.com/security/protect>

<http://www.apple.com/macosx/features/security/>

Install Anti-Virus Software

Texas State has a license that allows all faculty, staff and students to download and install McAfee VirusScan at no cost to the user. Update your anti-virus software daily or set it to update automatically. See <http://www.tr.txstate.edu/css/virus> and follow the instructions for your operating system.

Once you have installed anti-virus software, it is vitally important that you keep your virus definitions up-to-date. Anti-virus programs use these definitions to recognize new viruses and worms—without the definitions, your software can't catch and repair them.

Remove Spyware

Spyware is installed by downloading “free” software (file sharing, games), by viruses, or by unknown persons hacking into unpatched computers or computers that have weak or non-existent passwords.

Top Spyware Programs @ Texas State

- 1) Hotbar
- 2) 180Solutions
- 3) MyWaySearch
- 4) Gator
- 5) Click Spring/Purity Scan
- 6) WeatherBug
- 7) Webhancer
- 8) BestOffers
- 9) MarketScore
- 10) SaveNow/WhenU

If you have one of these programs installed, we strongly recommend that you uninstall it.

Stay in the Know

IT Security posts virus alerts, monthly podcasts and other security notifications on its website located at <http://www.vpit.txstate.edu/security>

Password Tips

Select a password that you can remember easily, but which will be as difficult as possible for anyone to guess. Do not share your password, and do not write it down.

One good way to choose a password is to make up a sentence and use the first letter of each word as a letter in your password. For example, you might find it easy to remember: My four children are wonderful when they're sleeping. Taking the first letter of each word, your password would be mfcawwts. Using both upper and lower-case letters, as well as numeric digits makes the password more difficult to guess, so a variation such as M4cawwts is better.

A word of advice: It is common for web sites to ask web surfers for an ID and password. Please use a password different from your Texas State passwords to prevent outsiders from gaining access to Texas State systems. You may find it helpful to think in terms of two kinds of passwords: your “outside” password for use at remote web sites and your “inside” password on Texas State systems.

Getting Help

If you think your computer has been compromised:

Record error messages or details that seem to be related to the compromise.

Stop using your computer.

Do not add, change, or remove any files.

Physically disconnect your computer from the network, if you are using a wireless network connection, turn off your computer.

Report your findings or concerns to the Help Desk at 512.245.HELP (4357)

Security Basics

This brochure addresses security issues related to your personal computer.

Help Desk

512.245.HELP (4357)

MCS 261

helpdesk@txstate.edu

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